

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**CABINET – 3 JANUARY 2019****DECLARATION OF DAWLEY POOLS AND PITMOUNDS LOCAL NATURE RESERVE****REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: BUSINESS, DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT****LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR J MINOR****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for cabinet to approve the declaration of Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds Local Nature Reserve under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- 1.2 The Council places great importance on the protection of, and the provision of access to, the natural environment. The Council has made a commitment to identify, retain and protect locally important green spaces valued by the local community for both the wildlife they support, the opportunities they provide for leisure and recreation and the positive impacts they bring to health and wellbeing.
- 1.3 The protection of the natural environment is delivered through a hierarchy of statutory and non-statutory site designations and a series of planning policies set out in the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan.
- 1.4 Telford and Wrekin's designated site network currently includes;
 - 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - 47 Local Wildlife Sites
 - 9 designated Local Nature Reserves
 - 5 adopted Local Nature Reserves
 - 3 proposed Local Nature Reserves (pLNR)
 - 200 Green Guarantee Sites
 - 52 Ancient Woodland Sites, and
 - 25 Local Geological Sites
- 1.5 Approving the declaration of Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds Local Nature Reserve will add to the fourteen reserves already approved by Cabinet, increasing the coverage of approved LNR's by 38 hectares to 515.36 hectares.

- 1.6 Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds proposed Local Nature Reserve is situated in the south-west of Telford. The site forms a network of protected sites with Lightmoor pLNR to the west and Rough Park pLNR to the south.
- 1.7 The site supports a network of wooded pit mounds and pools including:
- Castle Pool and The Dandy to the north
 - A collection of pools to the south including Wide Waters and Furnace Pools, and
 - The 'Sprynge' Pool to the south west
- The site supports a diverse bat assemblage with five species known to use the site. An un-named pool to the south of Wide Waters supports the only known site in the borough for Mare's-tail, a rare aquatic plant decreasing in range across Shropshire. Furnace Pools is also known to support the largest recorded population of great crested newts in the borough.
- 1.8 The site has high nature conservation value and a very high level of community interest and involvement with both Dawley Hamlets and Great Dawley Parish Councils supporting the newly formed Friends group.
- 1.9 Two areas of land immediately adjacent to parts of the proposed LNR are leased to the Telford Steam Railway Trust on a 999 year lease. Following consultation with the Trust, and following cabinet approval, a management agreement will be composed between the Council and the Trust to manage these areas of track bed for their nature conservation value whilst not constraining the future ability for the track bed to be reinstalled.
- 1.10 Maps showing the proposed LNR are presented in Appendix 1. The areas leased to the Telford Steam Railway Trust and proposed to be included in a future management agreement are illustrated in Appendix 2.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves, in principle, the declaration of Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds Local Nature Reserve; and
- 2.2 Delegates authority to complete the declaration process to the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Employment.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-operative Council priorities?	
	Yes	The designation of the LNR contributes to several priorities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained • improving the health and wellbeing of our communities and • addressing health inequalities
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The proposed LNR is a beneficial resource to people who live and visit the area.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Agreement at Cabinet – January 2019	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>Legal and due diligence surveys including geotechnical risk assessments (prior to the legal designation) will be funded from within the Strategic Planning Team budget and from a dowry received from Homes England Land Deal. The surveys are estimated to be in the region of up to £4,500.</p> <p>The dowry arose from a wider transfer of land from Homes England and is to fund ongoing maintenance of sites transferred to the Council as part of the HCA Land deal.</p> <p>If reasonable and proportionate steps are required as a result of the geotechnical risk assessment (referred to above and in 8.1, a request will be made to secure further funding from the current dowry received from Homes England.</p> <p>The Council, in partnership with the newly formed 'Friends of' group will continue to manage and maintain the site at its current levels in accordance with the draft management plan. The 'Friends of' group will provide ongoing support and will be responsible for securing third party funding for any additional works or site improvements,</p>

		<p>over and above the current maintenance regime.</p> <p>Where opportunities arise future Section 106 contributions will also be sought from developments adjacent to, and in the vicinity of, the LNR to enable additional enhancements over and above the current site maintenance regime.</p> <p>Telford Steam Railway Trust have a 999 year lease, this area of land is excluded from this LNR. However to ensure these areas are conserved and protected a Management Plan will be agreed, this will also enable track beds to be reinstalled. The ongoing maintenance costs will be held within current levels.</p> <p>Furnace Pools, to the south of the site, is listed under the Green Guarantee and is eligible for £1000 of Legacy Funding. Opportunities to match fund this are currently being explored. The ERDF funding will be ringfenced and used to provide biodiversity enhancements at the site.</p> <p>The proposed LNR contains a single grazing paddock and fishing rights adjacent to Wide Waters. The income streams from these will not be affected by the LNR declaration. (AEM 29/11/18)</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The Council has power under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to establish nature reserves by way of a declaration. The declaration will stand as conclusive evidence that the land is an LNR and will be managed as such. There is a making and publication procedure that needs to be followed regarding the declaration which includes prior consultation with Natural England. Legal Services will assist the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Employment as required regarding the process. Having a declaration in force will enable byelaws to be made, if required, for the protection of the LNR (Other legal points are set out elsewhere in this report) (IR 23/11/18)</p>

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Two areas of land immediately adjacent to the proposed southern boundary of the LNR are leased to the Telford Steam Railway Trust on a 999 year lease. Following consultation with the Telford Steam Railway Trust, and following cabinet approval, a management agreement will be composed between the Council and the Trust to manage these areas of track bed for their nature conservation value whilst not constraining the future ability for the track bed to be reinstalled.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds is partially within Dawley Hamlets and Great Dawley Parishes. However, the designation of the area as an LNR will deliver borough wide benefits.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 This report sets out a proposal for the Council to agree to declare the statutory Local Nature Reserve known as 'Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds'. This is in accordance with the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- 4.2 Local Nature Reserves provide opportunities for volunteering in the natural environment which increases physical activity, social interaction, encourages life long learning of new skills and allows individuals to give back to their local community which lead to increases in physical and mental wellbeing.
- 4.3 The site meets the necessary criteria for declaration and has a draft management plan. Informal engagement with Natural England has been undertaken. As part of the declaration process, and following Cabinet adoption, a consultation document will be issued to Natural England to seek their formal 'Welcome' prior to completion of the declaration and the associated legal seal.

5. STRATEGIC PLANNING

- 5.1 Following declaration the land shown in Appendices 1 and 2 will be managed as a Local Nature Reserve and will be protected from inappropriate uses or development.
- 5.2 The selection and declaration of Local Nature Reserves play an important role in maintaining a healthy balance in spatial planning between the built environment and green infrastructure. The Telford & Wrekin Local Plan Policies Map shows the site as a 'Proposed Local

Nature Reserve' (pLNR). A full list of adopted and proposed Local Nature Reserves is provided in Table 1. The Local Plan commits to completing the declaration of proposed Local Nature Reserves during the life time of the Local Plan - 2031.

Table 1: Local Nature Reserves in Telford

Declared Local Nature Reserves
Dothill
Limekiln Wood
Lodge Field
Madebrook and Stirchley Dingle
Madeley Pit Mounds
Telford Town Park
The Beeches
The Ercall and St Lawrence's Hill
The Granville
Adopted Local Nature Reserves in the declaration process
Apley Woods
Ketley Paddock Mound
Randlay Valley
Rough Park
Lightmoor
Proposed LNRs
Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds
Lillishall Hill
The Cockshutt

6. ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE STANDARDS (ANGST)

- 6.1 In 2010 Natural England, the countries statutory nature conservation authority, published 'Nature Nearby' setting out the recommended standards for Accessible Natural Greenspace:

"Everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural greenspace:

- *Of at least 2 ha in size, no more than 300 metres from home;*
- *At least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km of home; and*
- *One accessible 500 ha site within 10km of home; plus*
- *A minimum of one hectare of Local Nature Reserve per 1000 population"*

- 6.2 At the time of Telford's inception it was intended that every 1000 of the population would have access to four hectares of green space (similar to the then current green space standard of the Greater London Plan of 7 acres per 1000 population). This standard was achieved by the 1980s.

- 6.3 In 2016 the Marches Ecosystem Assessment modelled accessible greenspace across Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire and Herefordshire. The analysis revealed that 89% of households within Telford and Wrekin are within 300m of accessible natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size.

- 6.4 The borough of Telford and Wrekin has an estimated population of 170,200 people (Understanding Telford and Wrekin 2017). The adoption

of Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds Local Nature Reserve will increase the spatial coverage of adopted LNR's in the borough by 38 hectares to 515.36 hectares. The declaration of these adopted Local Nature Reserves will result in approximately 3.02ha of LNR per 1000 of the population, triple the minimum recommended standard.

7. HEALTH AND MENTAL WELLBEING

- 7.1 During the 2011 Census, 80.2% of the population of Telford and Wrekin reported that they had 'good' or 'very good' health. However, the census also highlighted that 15,938 adults aged 16-64 within the borough were living with a long-term health problem or disability that limited their daily activities. Furthermore, it is estimated that 17,400 adults aged between 16-64 within the borough have a common mental health disorder¹.
- 7.2 Health inequalities within communities are increasingly being linked to individuals' access to nature. The evidence base illustrating how access to nature is vital for good mental and physical health highlights the need for increased efforts to provide accessible and well-maintained natural areas for particularly disadvantaged groups². It has been shown that living close to accessible green spaces can promote public health and reduce levels of obesity, heart disease, reduce stress and levels of depression.
- 7.3 The designation of additional LNRs further reflects the Council's commitment to promoting health and wellbeing. Urban green space interventions are most effective when a physical improvement to the green space is coupled with a social engagement/participation element that promotes the green space and reaches out to new target groups ("dual approach")³. The proposed designations will provide a framework to increase engagement with internal partners such as 'My Options' and 'Healthy Telford' and external partners including: The Telford Green Space Partnership and the Shropshire Wildlife Trusts 'Live Well/Work Well With Nature' project.
- 7.4 The 'Telford Woods' Partnership, an initiative between the Small Woods Association and Telford & Wrekin Borough Council's Community Participation Team, will seek to identify opportunities for local members of the community and community groups to be directly involved in the management of the woodland compartments at the site, or make use of any timber that can be extracted (e.g. for use in craft-making activities) where this may benefit the health & well-being or skills development of

¹ Understanding Telford and Wrekin 2017: A demographic, health and socio-economic profile of our communities

http://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/4628/understanding_telford_and_wrekin_2017

² Institute for European Environmental Policy (2017) Nature For Health and Equity

³ World Health Organisation (2017) Urban Green Space Interventions and Health: A review of impacts and effectiveness.

those involved. There is a community centre and the Aquaduct Primary School, both immediately adjacent to the site, through which the local community could become involved for public healthcare, community or education purposes. The initiative would also seek to increase public awareness as to how the site is being managed (and the benefits of this to wildlife) via local facilities such as these.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

8.1 Internal and external consultation with relevant stakeholders has taken place.

- Internal consultations with Engineering Officers have confirmed the need for geotechnical risk assessments: due to the presence of mining legacy features including mineshafts a geotechnical risk assessment will need to be undertaken. Following which proportionate steps will be taken to make the land safe e.g. by fencing, installing appropriate signs informing visitors of any risks and performing risk assessments.
- Internal consultations with Drainage Officers have highlighted the need for any future management plan not to conflict with the requirement to manage and monitor Wide Waters Reservoir
- External consultations with Severn Trent have been supportive of the principle of declaration with additional comments mirroring those of internal drainage officers.
- External consultations with the Telford Steam Railway Trust have agreed the principle of entering parts of the track bed leased to the trust into a management agreement that conserves and protects existing interest features whilst not constraining future reinstallation of the track bed.

9. NEXT STEPS

9.1 In the case that Cabinet approves the principle of declaration of the proposed Local Nature Reserve and the recommended delegation, then the required next steps include the following:

- A) A formal consultation process with Natural England will be undertaken in Winter 2018 which includes the submission of a formal consultation document and a site visit following which Natural England will write to formally 'Welcome' the site
- B) All necessary property/title enquiries and searches being undertaken regarding land in the Council's ownership.
- C) The Assistant Director: Business, Development & Employment making or authorising the making of the formal declaration

10. PREVIOUS MINUTES

10.1 Cabinet 15th November 2018: Declaration of Lightmoor Local Nature Reserve

10.2 Cabinet 15th February 2018: Declaration of two new Local Nature Reserves: Rough Park and Randlay Valley

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Local Nature Reserves in England: A Guide to their selection and declaration Natural England, 2009

11.2 Local Nature Reserves: places for people and wildlife (English Nature)

11.3 Accessible natural green space in towns and cities: A review of appropriate size and distance criteria (English Nature Research Reports No. 153)

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Appendix 1: Dawley Pools and Pit Mounds Proposed Local Nature Reserve Boundary



